taminated with pesticides. One well and a tube-well were closed down. The concentration of pesticides in other wells was found to be in traces which is not harmful.

Memorandum of understanding with Swiss Government

*297. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:

SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high-level Indian team had visited Switzerland in September, 1987 to discuss an agreement for mutual assistance in criminal matters between the Government of India and Switzerland;

(b) when our Mission in Berne was suitably advised to do the needfull, indicating the dates thereof after it was decided to exchange letters between the two Governments;

(c) when was the letter given to Swiss Government and what was their response, indicating the dates and details thereof;

(d) at what stage the matter now rests and since when; and

(e) what are the remaining steps to be taken and their time schedule?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) Ministry of External Affairs were advised on 31st May, 1988 to take necessary action for exchange of letters between the two Governments. Indian Mission in Berne delivered the text of the draft letters to be exchanged to the Swiss Foreign Office on 15th June, 1988. Swiss Foreign Office in a meeting arranged on 24th June, 1988 suggested minor amendments in the draft of the letters to be exchanged, and also advised that before the agreement by exchange of letters is activated, they will have to submit to the Federal Council for final approval of the English text alongwith its French version. On 4th November, 1988, the Indian Ambassador in Berne had discussions with the Swiss Federal Foreign Office and finalised the French version of the letters. The Swiss Federal authorities are now to obtain the approval of their Federal Council. Formal exchange of letters can take place after approval by the Federal Council.

Income Tax exemption for Poultry Sector

*298. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that poultry farming has been recognised as an agricultural activity; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons for which this sector is being discriminated against by denying the facility of income-tax exemption as is being allowed to the agriculture sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) Poultry farming is not an agricultural activity under the Indian Income-tax Act, 1961.

(b) Does not arise.

Direct Recruitment to the Indian Economic Service

*299. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be leased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have currently suspended direct recruitment to the Indian Economic Service that began in 1961;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for its suspension;

(c) whether it is also a fact that presently over 500 officers of the IES have been stagnating for lack of appropriate promotional norms and cadre review since its inception; and

(d) if so, what measures have been taken by Government for early redressal of their grievances?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) and (b) Direct recruitment to the Indian Economic Service began in 1967. Recruitment to the Service has been deferred owing to stagnation/delay in promotion for direct recruits after implementation of Supreme Court judgement in February, 1986. Also appointment to vacancies in Grade IV are stayed as per orders passed by the Supreme Court in December 1987.

(c) The Indian Economic Service was constituted by aggregation of several posts located in various Ministries/Departments and carrying predominently economic functions. With participating Ministries/Departments offering lower level posts in much larger numbers, the Service acquired a wide base. Further as a result of implementation of Supreme Court judgement of February, 1986, a large number of promotee officers were inducted into the Service, affecting the promotion prospects of Service officers. Various proposals to restructure the cadre by further augmentation of middle and top levels have been recently considered by the IES Board.

(d) Amongst the significant measures are merger of Grade I and Grade II levels by upgradation of the latter, upgradation of some posts from Grade III level to Grade I level, strengthening of middle and top level by enadrement of additional posts, and decision to encadre posts above Junior Administrative Grade level.

Capital Punishment for Drug Trafficking

*300. SHRI M. KADHARSHA:
SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in a recent statement, Shri B. V. Kumar, Member of the Central Board of Excise and Customs (Anti-smuggling and Narcotics) has disclosed that some politicians involved in drug-trafficking have been identified, as reported in the Times of India of the 31st October, 1988;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government propose to provide for capital punishment for drug trafficking; if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. According to the officer, on 30-10-1988, after he addressed a press conference in Pune to highlight the steps taken by the Government to check drug trafficking, one of the Correspondents reportedly asked whether there was any political interference while dealing with narcotic offences to which the officer had replied that there was no such interference. It, however, appears that his statement has been distorted and misreported.

(c) A Bill for amending the existing provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, incorporating certain provisions in this regard is likely to be introduced in the Parliament shortly.

Customs Duty

2403. SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be